

Harnessing the Benefits of **Structured** Instruction



Custom content for Kognity by studioID



Today's teachers and administrators face no shortage of challenges when it comes to educating students. Increased regulations, demanding parents, stretched budgets, staffing shortages, diverse learning needs, and the introduction of new technology all make education more complex than in the past. One strategy for addressing such challenges is using digital-first, structured instruction that combines the best of technology with pedagogy. This systematic and scaffolded approach to curriculum creation and implementation has benefits to both teachers and students with improved outcomes.

“We are looking at ways to do more with less, as we continue to feel the squeeze on education.” Erin Lark, science and STEM teacher at iTech Preparatory school in Vancouver, WA, told K-12 Dive. “We are looking to leverage services that can serve as diversified resources and keep pace with the rate of change that is coming.”

Here's how implementing a prescriptive curriculum can help both school staff and students.



Benefits to school staff

Structured instruction offers many advantages to teachers and administrators. Some of these benefits include:

Streamlined workload

Aligned instruction means teachers can spend less energy on the time-consuming task of researching and creating lessons from various sources. Since many teachers do this work at home, this increased efficiency offers them better work-life balance, potentially mitigating the risk of teacher burnout over time. Efficient lesson creation is also important in today's environment, given the teacher shortage and potential expertise limitations for certain instructors.

Jeff McCoy, associate superintendent for academics at Greenville County Schools in South Carolina, added that many teachers

use structured curriculum for Tier 1 lessons, focused on the core instruction. This frees them to spend more time on Tier 2 (targeted instruction) and Tier 3 (interventions), which involves creating customized lessons based on time spent getting to know students' capabilities on a deeper level.

“One of the biggest benefits of structured curriculum is that the teachers spend less time finding activities and resources, and more time meeting the needs of individual children who might be struggling with the content,” added McCoy.



Confidence to meet standards

Meeting state or district standards has become an increasingly important, and sometimes stressful, aspect of a teacher's job. Structured instruction gives teachers peace of mind knowing that the lessons they present align with state requirements and prepare their students to meet those standards.

"Standards are sometimes difficult to understand, even for teachers," noted McCoy. "We spend a lot of time unpacking standards with teachers and helping them understand what's required. Having that done for you, with recommended activities that align to the state requirements — not loosely, but to the depth of the standard — is critical."

Assistance for nontraditional teachers

The teacher shortage has forced many states to loosen certification requirements for teachers. As a result, a growing number of teachers bring industry expertise to the classroom but no experience actually teaching. Structured education can provide tools to help these teachers succeed while they gain vital classroom experience.

"Small and medium rural districts are really struggling to find teachers," Sheryl Abshire, edtech consultant and former CTO of Calcasieu Parish Public Schools in Louisiana, told K-12 Dive. "You might have an engineer teaching math who is great at building a plane or a manufacturing facility, but that doesn't mean they understand how to teach basic math or science to middle schoolers. That's where a structured curriculum is necessary."

Optimizing data

Structured instruction provides real-time content and access to analytics and assessment support to teachers and administrators. Schools that have already embraced digital transformation lean heavily on the data created through structured instruction, using the insights it provides to adjust lessons and resources to improve outcomes for both students and teachers.

Best-in-class systems also offer safeguards around who can access the data. For example, teachers might be able to access aggregated, anonymized data to make strategic decisions but a math teacher might not have access to a specific student's performance in an unrelated science class.

“

“We are looking to leverage services that can serve as diversified resources and keep pace with the rate of change that is coming.”

Erin Lark

Science and STEM teacher at iTech Preparatory school in Vancouver, WA

Assessment support

For inexperienced teachers, creating strong assessments can be a time-consuming, challenging task. That's particularly true for 3-D assessment, an increasingly popular testing method that requires students to think critically to apply concepts and usually involves rubric grading, rather than simply grading questions right or wrong. Structured instruction streamlines this process and generates instant analytics to help teachers tweak future lessons and assessments for even better student outcomes.

Preservice teacher prep

The world is evolving quickly, and teachers must prepare for whatever classroom technology they encounter next. Giving teachers a systematic approach to lessons and the opportunity to use different platforms can help them grow into more effective educators and flatten the learning curve of lesson creation, execution, and implementation.



Benefits to students

In addition to the advantages for teachers described in the previous section, there are many upsides for students when using structured curriculum in the classroom.

Some of these benefits include:

Engaging lessons

Students often respond well to a reliable structure in the classroom, which extends to structured curriculum. Today's digital-first students also want and need lessons that take a dynamic approach to ensuring they have an in-depth understanding of concepts at their level.

“A student who cannot customize learning to meet their speed — whether slowed down, repeated or accelerated — is likely to disengage,” Lark said. “The same applies if the system treats them like a number versus an actual human — they are going to disengage.”



Support for different learners

Today's teachers recognize that all students learn differently. By having additional support and materials available, students with learning disabilities or other challenges have the opportunity to engage in ways that work best for them.

Structured instruction also gives teachers the freedom to lean into the aspects of instruction that go beyond technology, such as building relationships and interacting with students on a personal level.

“One of the most impactful things we can do for students is provide just-in-time support that makes the difference for them as individuals,” explained Lark. “We know that speaking to the midline is not an effective practice, yet constraints on our resources force that time and again.”

Educational equity

Structured, high-quality instruction can help close the gap between the support available to students in the wealthiest schools and those with fewer resources. When used across a district or county, for example, the same structured instruction programming can ensure that all the district's students have access to the same educational resources. It can also benefit districts with more transient populations, since students may require less time getting up to speed when they change schools.

“

“One of the most impactful things we can do for students is provide just-in-time support that makes the difference for them as individuals.”

Erin Lark

Science and STEM teacher at iTech
Preparatory school in Vancouver, WA



Real-world connections

Using structured curriculum helps ensure content remains up to date. Teachers can present their students with information and materials that reflect new information or trends in a constantly changing world.

Furthermore, the best instruction not only demonstrates real-world application of concepts, but also allows students to practice the soft skills of communication and cooperation. The right curriculum can prepare students for endeavors beyond the classroom, whether that includes college or taking another post-secondary path. Structured, digital-first learning also provides students with the agency to learn in the way that works best for them.

“If a student can master their tool and adapt it as needed, that is something powerful that they can take with them regardless of what comes next,” said Lark. “Not only does it grant them access to valuable content, but it supports personal development.”



Spotlighting structured instruction in science

Structured instruction has use cases across all subjects, widely accepted as a path toward better outcomes in literacy for younger children. Yet new research strongly supports applying structured instruction specifically in science.

Science instruction is particularly challenging for some teachers, given the emphasis on labs and hands-on learning, along with the evolution toward a more inquiry-based, student-led instructional approach.

A [recent report from the Carnegie Corporation](#) found that asking individual teachers to create high-quality and standards-aligned curricula is unreasonable, instead noting that “teachers should be provided high-quality instructional materials and supported to adapt them to students’ needs and their local context.”

According to the report, states and districts should allow for the adoption of open educational resources (OER) created by commercial publishers — and improve the flexibility for schools and districts to purchase such products.

It further recommended that, as the use of such materials increases, preservice teachers should learn how to use them and demonstrate their ability to do so. However, in a featured survey of teachers and administrators, 62% believed teachers should not be expected to create their own instructional materials.

“The argument for putting high-quality materials in the teachers’ hands supports the idea that teachers deserve higher-quality, more customizable curriculum options that are aligned with a state’s academic standards,” the report states. “Equipping teachers with the best evidence-based tools available will help them personalize instruction and meet the needs of each student. Such instructional materials, accompanied by aligned, high-quality professional learning assessments, can support teachers to be successful professionals.”

“

“Equipping teachers with the best evidence-based tools available will help them personalize instruction and meet the needs of each student.”

Carnegie Corporation

K–12 Science Education in the United States:
A Landscape Study for Improving the Field

 Kognity



How Kognity can **help**

Kognity creates digital-first, standard-aligned science curriculum that empowers teachers to unlock the potential of their students. Teachers can take the materials available on the platform and adapt them to best fit their teaching style and meet the specific needs of their students. [Contact Kognity today](#) to learn more about how Kognity can enhance teacher performance and improve student outcomes in your district or school.



Kognity

Kognity is a global edtech company established in 2015. Kognity aims to radically improve teaching and learning by providing the highest quality digital resources to teachers and students around the world.

[Learn More →](#)

studio / **ID**

BY INDUSTRY DIVE

studioID is Industry Dive's global content studio offering brands an ROI rich tool kit: Deep industry expertise, first-party audience insights, an editorial approach to brand storytelling, and targeted distribution capabilities. Our trusted in-house content marketers help brands power insights-fueled content programs that nurture prospects and customers from discovery through to purchase, connecting brand to demand.

LEARN MORE